



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Point Pelee Migration Spectacle 2018**

May 12, 2018 to May 19, 2018

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*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*



*Rose-breasted Grosbeak was one of the more common migrants that we saw during our time in the Point Pelee area. We saw them almost daily, and had some great views. Photo by Jay VanderGaast, from a previous tour.*

There's no denying that Point Pelee is an amazing migration hot spot, with an incredible number of birds moving through each spring on their way up to northern breeding areas. There's also no denying that on this year's tour we saw a lot of warblers. But, it's hard to fathom that as good as it is, it really gives us just the tiniest glimpse into what is really going on in regards to migration. An eBird report from Tadoussac, in Quebec, on May 28th fills in the picture a little more. If you haven't seen it, on that day, a group of birders counted over 700,000 warblers passing by their viewing spot in a 9-hour period! That number included some 144,000 Bay-breasted Warblers, and nearly 110,000 Cape May Warblers, two species that are rarely seen in double digit numbers at Pelee. It just puts into perspective that, while plenty of warblers put down at places like Point Pelee, their numbers are just a tiny fraction of the true numbers that are migrating each night, most flying right over the lakeshore hot spots without stopping in.

While our numbers were nowhere near those mind-blowing totals from Tadoussac, we still saw a good number of birds, and better yet, we saw most of them incredibly well, often at eye level or below, out in the open, and frequently close enough that binoculars were barely necessary. In fact, of the 27 warbler species we saw, only one, that elusive Worm-eating, didn't give us excellent looks. The other 26 were awesome, and not surprisingly, figured heavily in the top 3 voting at the trip's end. Favorites ranged from multiple fiery male Blackburnian Warblers (the overall bird of the trip), handsome necklaced Canada Warblers, the dapper, capped Wilson's Warbler, and gorgeous Bay-breasted and Black-throated Blue Warblers. With no foliage in the tree canopies, most of the warblers were feeding down low where the profusion of new growth was drawing in swarms of small insects for them to gorge themselves on. Great for us, as we got to enjoy them without a single case of "warbler neck"! A list of warblers that didn't make anyone's top 3 (Prothonotary, Black-throated Green, Northern Parula, among others) despite fantastic close views, attests to the fact that narrowing our picks to just 3 birds was a difficult choice indeed.

In addition to all the warblers at Pelee were a bunch of other showy migrants that wowed the crowds. Pied Rose-breasted Grosbeaks flaunted their rosy breasts, Scarlet Tanagers dazzled with their brilliant red plumage, hordes of Baltimore Orioles did likewise with their orange hues, while the gorgeous blues of Indigo Buntings nearly blew us away! More subtly toned vireos, including a handsome Yellow-throated and decent numbers of Blue-headed and Philadelphia were also among the throngs of birds. And virtually every species mentioned above was, at one point or another, enjoyed at close range

at about waist level or below! Of course, there were birds that stayed up higher, such as an exhausted Green Heron catching its breath near the tip, and a striking Red-headed Woodpecker feeding quietly in a tree that was just budding out, but these were also seen beautifully. Offshore birds were also an attraction here, with Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebe, and all three species of scoters among the highlights. Nearby Hillman Marsh also offered up some goodies: gorgeous breeding plumaged Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Short-billed Dowitcher, among others, with the first of several Sandhill Cranes nearby. All in all I think Pelee lived up to all the migration hype that draws folks here spring after spring.

The vagaries of migration season were revealed to us at our next stop, Rondeau Provincial Park. The day before we got there, the park was reportedly full of migrants, and it was touted as the best birding day of the spring. When we arrived there the next morning however, it was to find that almost all those migrants had moved on overnight, leaving precious few for us to eke out in our time there. Still, there were enough good finds to make the park a worthwhile stop on our way east. A charming Tufted Titmouse at the visitor center feeders, a sleepy-looking Eastern Screech-Owl, a trio of cooperative White-eyed Vireos, a fly-catching Summer Tanager, and a long-staying vagrant White-winged Dove were among the highlights during our brief visit. Migrants were more evident at Long Point the next day, though for us, it was the birds on territory that were our main focus. Blue-winged Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and Pine Warbler all came through as hoped for, as did a Grasshopper Sparrow, thanks to a tip from a friendly local. Nearby wetlands areas were also great, with delightful Marsh Wrens and a pair of Black Terns at Big Creek Conservation Area and a very curious Virginia Rail at Port Rowan Wetlands rounding out our time in this wonderful area.

Leaving Lake Erie behind, we headed north to the shores of Lake Ontario, where the migration activity declined again. With no land migrants to be found, we turned our attention to the water, and picked up good views of Long-tailed Ducks and nesting Red-necked Grebes. A stop at Cranberry Marsh failed to produce any surprises, though a few nice ducks and another Virginia Rail, this one even bolder than the previous day's, were appreciated. After that, we moved north once again, heading for our grand finale in the picturesque grasslands of the Carden Alvar. This region never disappoints, and true to form, it impressed once again. Bobolinks burred from roadside fenceposts and scrub junipers amidst the tall rank grass, an Upland Sandpiper posed on a boulder not far off the road, a pair of Eastern Bluebirds shone despite the rainy final morning, and a Black-billed Cuckoo called from a clump of roadside scrub. A stunning male Lawrence's Warbler, a rare hybrid between Golden-winged and Blue-winged warblers was a treat here as well, the first one I've ever seen. And finally, as the time approached to head for the airport, our 27th warbler, a magnificent male Golden-winged, finally put in an appearance, a fitting end to a fun tour.

It was a real pleasure sharing all of these wonderful sightings and more with all of you, so thanks to all for joining me on this year's trip. Good birds, good company, good food (Lake Erie perch and pickerel-- yum!!!) and some good laughs (that intro to Tim Horton's still makes me chuckle!) make for a great tour, and we had all these things in spades. I hope this list keeps the memories of this trip fresh in your minds, and perhaps lures you into taking another trip with me soon. I will certainly look forward to meeting again somewhere, someday, the sooner the better!

--Jay

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#### KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### *Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)*

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*) – Daily in fair numbers, with several broods present at Hillman Marsh. [N]

**MUTE SWAN** (*Cygnus olor*) – About 10 of these elegant birds were on Cranberry Marsh, where the low water levels really didn't seem to bother them.

[I]

**TRUMPETER SWAN** (*Cygnus buccinator*) – A reintroduction program in the province began in the early 1980's, and the population has grown considerably since then, with the birds now well-established and self-sustaining. A couple of folks saw one in the marsh at Pelee, and three birds were at Cranberry. [I]

**WOOD DUCK** (*Aix sponsa*) – After having several unsatisfactory flyovers at Pelee, our fortunes changed along Rondeau's Spicebush Trail where we scoped a handsome male perched in a tree over the trail.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – A pair floating along in swamp forest in Pelee's Tilden Woods was unusual for there. Also unusual was that they seemed to have gotten pretty habituated to the hordes of onlookers and were quite content to allow us to enjoy the from fairly close range. Our only others were a pair that flushed out of Prospect Marsh.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) – A couple of fairly distant males were scoped at Hillman. Better were a closer trio of drakes at Cranberry.

**GADWALL** (*Mareca strepera*) – Aside from the ubiquitous Mallard, this was the most numerous dabbler on the trip.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Every day, though in pretty small numbers on a couple of days (i.e. just one our final morning in the Carden Alvar).

**AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** (*Anas rubripes*) – Cranberry Marsh didn't produce quite as much as I'd hoped, but a lingering pair of these ducks was a good find.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN)** (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – A lone pair at Hillman gave reasonable scope views.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) – An early migrant that rarely lingers in southern Ontario so late, but we had a lone bird among the heaps of muskrat lodges at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

**GREATER SCAUP** (*Aythya marila*) – Daily off the Tip at Pelee, with a flock of roughly 100 birds the first morning.

**LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) – Though Greater Scaup were more numerous at Pelee, the first pair of scaup we saw there were Lessers. Shortly after we'd seen them, the first of many Greaters started appearing, giving us a good chance to compare these two very similar species.

**SURF SCOTER** (*Melanitta perspicillata*) – A lone female was in the company of a large number of Greater Scaup off the Tip on our first morning.

**WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (*Melanitta fusca*) – It's not uncommon to miss all 3 scoter species on this tour, but this is the most likely species to be present, and is likely to be more numerous than the others. We saw several small groups of them at Pelee.

**BLACK SCOTER** (*Melanitta americana*) – Scanning through a small group of White-winged Scoters and large numbers of Greater Scaup paid off when I spotted a single female of this locally scarce species tagging along with them. Almost everyone got a scope look at her before she disappeared and couldn't be relocated.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** (*Clangula hyemalis*) – The deeper waters of Lake Ontario are more to the liking of this northern duck, and fair numbers were lingering offshore at Burlington, with a couple of birds coming reasonably close to shore at Burloak Park.

**COMMON MERGANSER** (*Mergus merganser*) – A single male was seen by a few of us from the van on our final morning as we drove along the shore of Lake Simcoe at Orillia.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*) – Quite numerous offshore at Pelee, then again along the Burlington waterfront.

*Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)*

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Great looks at a handsome male, in the same field I've seen this species a number of times near Hillman Marsh. [I]

**RUFFED GROUSE** (*Bonasa umbellus*) – We could hear one drumming from deep in the forest on our final morning around the Carden region. [\*]

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – The reintroduction program seems to have been a success. A total of about 4400 birds were introduced into the province in the early 1980's, about 75 years after they had been extirpated in Ontario, and the population is now estimated at over 70,000! They certainly seem to be more numerous each year at Pelee, where we saw lots of them daily. And we saw at least one each day of the trip, including those very tame ones at the feeding areas at Cranberry Marsh. [I]

*Gaviidae (Loons)*

**RED-THROATED LOON** (*Gavia stellata*) – A winter-plumaged bird had been hanging around off the Tip for about a week before we arrived, and we managed to find it there on our first morning at Pelee.

**COMMON LOON** (*Gavia immer*) – The lone bird we saw off the Tip on a couple of mornings was, like the Red-throated Loon, still in winter plumage.

*Podicipedidae (Grebes)*

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – One was heard calling at the Port Rowan Wetlands, but only Eugenia saw it after the rest of us were already on our way back to the van.

**HORNED GREBE** (*Podiceps auritus*) – We normally would only get a couple of these still hanging around in the Pelee area, but this year there were still quite a few, with up to a dozen on our first morning there, many of them already in full, beautiful breeding plumage.

**RED-NECKED GREBE** (*Podiceps grisegena*) – The nesting pair in the little sheltered bay at Burloak Park were hanging on there despite the high water. [N]

*Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)*

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Numerous on both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, especially so on the latter, as we were quite close to a large nesting colony on some small islands in Burlington Bay.

*Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)*

**AMERICAN BITTERN** (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – Heading to the Carden Alvar on the final morning, we had a pair of these fly up out of a roadside marsh. I pulled over quickly, and we had super looks as they flew right at and over us, before landing somewhere on the other side of the road. We tried to relocate them there, but they flew up again just as I'd spotted one in the marsh, and they were joined by a 3rd bird as they flapped off over the forest and out of sight.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) – Seen in small numbers on most days.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – Great scope views of a very tired-looking bird perched in a tree near the solar panel at the Tip. It was evidently recovering after an exhausting overnight flight across the lake, and stayed put for a long time, allowing loads of birders to ogle it through the morning. Our only other one was a distant bird at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – About 5-10 of these were present daily at Pelee, and they were seen regularly throughout the rest of the trip as well.

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Seen daily from Rondeau onwards, including a couple of birds on nests in the Orillia region. [N]

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus hudsonius*) – One flew overhead as we awaited the shuttle at the Tip one morning, though I didn't see it well enough to sex it. Our only other one was a female that flew past as we stood on one of the viewing platforms at Cranberry Marsh.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*) – Surprisingly few for a migration hotspot like Pelee, but we did have a couple of sightings of them flying over, striking fear in the hearts of all the Passerines there.

**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Our only one was an immature flying with a group of vultures over the Pelee VC parking lot during lunch one day.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) – A calling bird over the forest at Backus Woods remained out of sight, but the next afternoon we had a good view of one flying across the road ahead of us in the Carden Alvar.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – I'm not sure I've ever seen one at Pelee, and this common hawk is surprisingly easy to miss on this tour, but we did manage a few sightings this trip, mainly from the van as we drove along the main highways.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**VIRGINIA RAIL** (*Rallus limicola*) – The first one we saw at the Port Rowan Wetlands showed beautifully, and I heard at least one person remark they'd never had a better view of one. Then the next day at Cranberry Marsh the same remark was repeated as another Virginia Rail literally walked right up to us, stopping just inches from my toes while we looked down at it. I challenge all of you to ever get a better view than that!

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*) – One on our final morning near Orillia showed extremely well, but it wasn't quite as bold as the previous day's Virginia Rail. Though the Sora came right out into the open, it stayed at least 10' away from us at all times.

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*) – Port Rowan Wetlands was crawling with these. I counted at least 10, but that was just the ones that were in view.

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) – A lone coot was among all the gallinules at Port Rowan Wetlands.

*Gruidae (Cranes)*

**SANDHILL CRANE** (*Antigone canadensis*) – We usually manage to get one of these on this tour, though it isn't usually as easy as it was this year. We ended up seeing cranes on four different days. First we had a pair in a stubble field near Leamington, and we followed these up with singles at Big Creek Conservation Area, Prospect Marsh, and along Wylie Road.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – With all the standing water around, Hillman Marsh wasn't the usual shorebird magnet it is most years, but we still tallied a few good species there, including 50 (exact count, not an estimate) of these, most of which were in gorgeous breeding plumage.

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Widespread, common and seen every day of the tour.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**UPLAND SANDPIPER** (*Bartramia longicauda*) – A specialty of the grasslands in the Carden Alvar, where they are fairly common but not always easy to see. We started out with fair scope views of some distant ones our first afternoon there, then improved on that the next morning when we flushed one from the roadside and it briefly sat on a nearby boulder before dropping into the tall grass and out of sight.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – Is there any more beautiful shorebird than a Ruddy Turnstone in breeding plumage? We had awesome views of two of these stunners among a bunch of Dunlins at Hillman.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – The most numerous of the shorebirds at Hillman, with another 20+ seen at Cranberry Marsh.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – A trio of these small peeps were picked out by Richard and Martha at Hillman, but they vanished before we could get everyone a look.

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus griseus*) – Four of these dropped in at Hillman Marsh as we watched, and we had lovely scope views of them. The birds most often found here belong to the western subspecies, *hendersoni*, and that's what these birds were.

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK** (*Scolopax minor*) – We had a good show of a bird displaying at dusk right next to our hotel at Pelee, but we just weren't able to track him down on the ground this time.

**WILSON'S SNIPE** (*Gallinago delicata*) – Fairly common in the Carden Alvar, where we had several birds doing display flights overhead, and also had excellent studies of one perched on a roadside fencepost.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – Seen almost daily in small numbers.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A couple of these were the first shorebirds we spotted at Hillman.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**BONAPARTE'S GULL** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – A couple of hundred birds, mainly in non-breeding plumage, were present at Hillman.

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) – The default gull in most of the province, though we saw relatively few. Had we hung out at McDonald's however...

**HERRING GULL (AMERICAN)** (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) – A few of these large gulls were seen offshore at Pelee.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Eight of these large terns were roosting among the gulls at Hillman Marsh, a couple more were seen around Orillia on our final morning.

**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – Our lone record was a pair of birds that flew by a bit distantly as we walked along one of the dikes at Big Creek.

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – The most commonly seen tern, with fair numbers of them off the Tip, and others elsewhere.

**FORSTER'S TERN** (*Sterna forsteri*) – Similar to Common Tern, but this species has silvery wings, lacking the black Common shows, and a more orange bill (rather than red) with more black on the tip than Common shows. We had scope views of a single bird roosting at Hillman (where there were also several Common for comparison), and saw a few more at Long Point.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Mostly after we left Pelee. [I]

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – This vagrant has been at Rondeau for a while now; this is its 4th consecutive summer there. We stopped at the usual house but didn't see the bird, but just before we drove off, I heard it singing. It then flew out from its hidden perch and landed out in the open for all to see. Perhaps not an overly exciting bird for many birders, but it is a good tick for Canada!

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*) – Seen daily, though at Pelee only in fairly small numbers.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) – Seems like we were always just a little behind the cuckoo sightings at Pelee, as we looked for several that had "been here just a minute ago." In the end, we had to find our own, and we did just that, getting nice looks at a calling bird in the rain in the Carden Alvar on our final morning.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**EASTERN SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops asio*) – A roosting bird at Pelee had moved on just before we arrived so I thought we'd missed this species, but as luck would have it, we learned of a day roosting bird at the same site where a Summer Tanager had been hanging around at Rondeau. We made that our final stop before leaving the park, and had great scope studies of a gray morph bird sitting out in the open above the road.

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**COMMON NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordeiles minor*) – My friend Bruce had found 3 of these on day roosts along the trail at Northwest Beach one afternoon, so we kept our eyes peeled as we birded along the trail. All I can say is good thing Bruce happened by while we were there, as these things sure are cryptic, and I'm not 100% sure we'd have found any of them on our own. As it was, we got super scope views of two of them.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**CHIMNEY SWIFT** (*Chaetura pelagica*) – A couple of birds flew high overhead at Pelee one morning, but our best views were of several over the Tim Horton's during our breakfast stop in Blenheim.

*Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)*

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus colubris*) – Seen daily, in varying numbers, with the largest numbers being 20+ around Point Pelee on our very first morning.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – Scarce this year, and we had just one sighting, a very cooperative bird that allowed long scope views as it fed in a treetop near the Tip at Pelee.

**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – Best seen at Rondeau where they were fairly numerous. This is a species that seems to be on the increase across southern Ontario.

**YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – The beautiful mature hardwood forest at Backus Woods is superb for woodpeckers, including this species, which gave us a couple of great looks there.

**DOWNY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides pubescens*) – A common and familiar bird which we saw regularly, but how about that one feeding on the ground a couple of yards away at Paletta Park? Hard to beat a view like that.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) – Absent at Pelee, but a breeder at Rondeau and Long Point. In fact, we had one entering a nest hole in the Backus Woods. [N]

**NORTHERN FLICKER** (*Colaptes auratus*) – There were fewer of these common woodpeckers than I would have expected, though we still had a few good sightings. For the west coasters, these may have looked a bit odd, as the birds here are the Eastern, "yellow-shafted" variety.

**PILEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – Dori had the best views of this large woodpecker when she turned back early along the trail at Rondeau and wound up with a 10-minute study of one working over a large dead tree trunk. The rest of us caught up with some pretty decent flybys of a couple of birds in Backus Woods.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – A rather quiet walk up the West Beach Trail was considerably enlivened when we spotted a lovely female Merlin teed up in a bare tree, where she stayed long after we'd soaked up some great scope views.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus cooperi*) – A Kirtland's Warbler search along the Northwest Beach seasonal trail failed to turn up the warbler, but there were plenty of other birds around, among which was our only one of these boreal flycatchers. It was also nice to have a pewee nearby to allow for some direct comparisons.

**EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus virens*) – Though there were none around on our first day at Pelee, numbers started picking up through our stay and there were a fair few being seen and heard by the time we left.

**YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax flaviventris*) – Small numbers of these late migrating Empids were starting to trickle through at Pelee and Rondeau, and though we didn't see many, in the end we all had super looks at a couple, including a very bright yellow one as we searched for the Kirtland's along Northwest Beach.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax traillii*) – We had some excellent close looks at a couple of "Traill's" type flycatchers along the Woodland Trail at Pelee, but without any vocalizations to narrow it down, we left them as unidentified. I did hear Willows calling at a spot near Long Point but no one seemed inclined to pull themselves away from all the warblers.

**EAST FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax minimus*) – The most common Empid, with quite a few showing very well at Pelee and elsewhere.

**EASTERN PHOEBE** (*Sayornis phoebe*) – The earliest migrant flycatcher to arrive with the main migration coming through in mid-April, and most are usually further north by this time. Still, we found a straggler along the West Beach Trail at Pelee one morning.

**GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – I think the main movement of these flycatchers was still to come, as there were very few around anywhere. We had just one per day at Pelee, and a few in Backus Woods, but we often see and hear more.

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – Coming through in decent numbers, and we saw them daily.

*Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)*

**WHITE-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo griseus*) – An often difficult migrant to find, as very few, if any actually breed in Ontario, and this is right at the northern limit of their range. We were lucky at Rondeau, as we eventually tracked down a very cooperative bird we'd been told about along the Spicebush Trail, then found our own ones, a pair, near the Pony Barn. It'll be interesting to learn if this pair sticks around and nests, as I suspect they might.

**YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Never a numerous migrant at Pelee, so I was pretty pleased to have incredible close views of one foraging in the open below eye level near the halfway tram stop our first morning. That was to be the only one we saw until we ran into a pair in Backus Woods, though they stayed high in the foliage of some tall trees and were much trickier to see well.

**BLUE-HEADED VIREO** (*Vireo solitarius*) – An early migrant that generally peaks at Pelee well before our tour though there were a few stragglers about. We saw at least 3 on our first day there, and another the next morning. Our only other one was an in-the-hand bird that had been mist-netted and banded at Old Cut. It's always fun to get those kind of close-up views!

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – Almost always outnumbered by the next two species, and I usually only see these in ones or twos, which was the case our first couple of days at Pelee when we saw one each day. I think the 6 birds we had there the 3rd day was a record high count for me! It was also fun to hear one singing, sounding very much like a Red-eyed Vireo, but slower-paced and with longer pauses between phrases.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) – The most numerous vireo over the first couple of days, though by day three Red-eyed took over that position.

**RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) – The numbers went up daily at Pelee, though only from 1 the first day to about a dozen on the last. I think the peak of these vireos was still to come.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**BLUE JAY** (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Numerous and seen daily, including several flocks reverse migrating off the Tip.

**AMERICAN CROW** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – As usual we saw no crows at Pelee, though Bob saw one around Leamington. Once we left there however, there were plenty.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – The Carden area is a good place to find these bulky Corvids, often being chased away by their smaller cousins.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – A pair flew across the road ahead of the van en route to Long Point, so we made a quick stop, but the birds stayed well away from the road and the looks were less than fabulous.

Hirundinidae (Swallows).

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A pair among a number of Bank Swallows at Burloak Park were the only ones for the trip.

**PURPLE MARTIN** (*Progne subis*) – A few birds were hanging about a martin apartment in someone's front yard when we went to look for the White-winged Dove at Rondeau. [N]

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Numerous, and seen daily, including plenty at the bluebird boxes in the Carden Alvar. [N]

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – A flock of swallows at the Tip the first morning were primarily this species. We also saw a bunch at a nesting colony during our stop at Burloak Park for the Red-necked Grebes. [N]

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – By far the most abundant of the swallows, with good numbers every day. Hard to imagine that this is a species of special concern in Ontario, but though they are common, they have been undergoing quite a drastic decline, hence all the Barn Swallow nest structures we saw along the highway during our drive down to Pelee--mitigation for removal of barns and other nesting structures during development projects. [N]

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – Just a single pair at Hillman Marsh.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice).

**BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE** (*Poecile atricapillus*) – Not an overly common bird at Pelee, though we did see a couple there. Away from there though they were much more frequently encountered.

**TUFTED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Southern Ontario is the northern limit of the range of titmouse, and it is unsurprisingly uncommon here. We saw just one, at the feeders outside the visitor center at Rondeau.

Sittidae (Nuthatches).

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) – Mostly further north by this time, and our only records were of a heard only bird at Backus Woods. [\*]

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta carolinensis*) – A lone bird at Rondeau and a few more in Backus Woods were the only ones we saw this trip.

Troglodytidae (Wrens).

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – A familiar bird that was seen daily at all sites along Lake Erie, but we had no further records once we headed north.

**SEDGE WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*) – One recent migrant was foraging among the boulders right at the Tip on our first morning at Pelee. This is a pretty irregular species in the park, and was one of the better finds we had there this year.

**MARSH WREN** (*Cistothorus palustris*) – There were a bunch of these calling at Big Creek CA, and we managed to see a couple of them nicely, tails cocked almost to the backs of their heads. A couple more were seen at Prospect Marsh while we searched for Soras.

**CAROLINA WREN** (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – There seemed to be more of these around than usual this spring, and they seemed easier to see, too. We had several excellent looks at these attractive wrens, with some especially nice looks at the pair feeding young in the nest in our picnic lunch shelter at the Sanctuary picnic area. [N]

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers).

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliptila caerulea*) – There were also quite a few of these tiny birds at Pelee and elsewhere along the Lake Erie hotspots, and we saw them regularly until we headed north.

Regulidae (Kinglets).

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) – Though this is an early migrant and most had already passed through, there were still small numbers trickling through at Pelee.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia sialis*) – We came across a lone bird in a meadow as we returned to the van from Tilden's Woods, though not everyone had a good view, so finding a much more cooperative pair in the Carden Alvar our last morning was a good thing. Despite all the bluebird boxes along Wylie Road, bluebirds seemed to be scarce there this year.

**VEERY** (*Catharus fuscescens*) – Small numbers daily at each of the Lake Erie hot spots, and many of them offered up some fantastic looks.

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** (*Catharus minimus*) – A good influx of these occurred on our third day at Pelee, and we tallied at least 8 of them, getting some very good definitive looks at this, the scarcest of the migrant thrushes. We had no other records on any other day.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) – The influx of Gray-cheeked Thrushes was nothing compared to the swarms of Swainson's Thrushes moving through the park the same day. We saw somewhere between 50 and 100 of them, and other birders estimated several hundred in the park that day. There were quite a few around on every other day along the Lake Erie shoreline as well.

**WOOD THRUSH** (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – The beautiful song of this thrush was heard regularly, but they were tougher to see than the other thrushes. Still, we tracked one down for scope views at Rondeau, and there were a few quick looks at Backus Woods as well.

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) – Loads were seen every day of the trip, and Eugenia seemed especially adept at finding their nests. [N]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

**GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – We missed catbird on only one day; almost every other day there were plenty.

**BROWN THRASHER** (*Toxostoma rufum*) – A pretty common breeding bird in the Carden Alvar. They weren't quite as vocal and visible as they usually are, likely due to the cool, wet weather, but we still managed to see a couple there.

Sturnidae (Starlings).

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Somehow we managed to miss this common bird on our first day at Pelee. Unfortunately we didn't miss it again on any subsequent day. [H]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings).

**CEDAR WAXWING** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Strangely few were around, and we had but a single pair at Pelee on our final day there, and a few birds each at Rondeau and Long Point.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers).*

- OVENBIRD** (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – Heard more often than seen, but we did lock onto a couple of cooperative birds, including one sitting in a fallen tree and preening next to the Woodland Trail.
- WORM-EATING WARBLER** (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – One of my local contacts told me there was one of these locally rare birds singing near the halfway shuttle stop so we headed straight down to try our luck. While the bird was still present, and sang intermittently, it mostly stayed out of sight, and only Bob was lucky enough to lay eyes on it. This species occurs in a rare southern overshoot at Pelee; there are no breeding records in the province.
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Though we heard a few at Pelee, we didn't lay eyes on one until we lured in a singing male in Backus Woods for some fine views.
- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – This species is becoming scarcer, as hybridization with Blue-winged Warbler seems to be swamping Golden-winged gene pools. The species are genetically very similar (99.7%) according to a recent article (that you can read here if you're interested: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/mixed-wing-warblers-golden-wings-and-blue-wings-are-99-97-percent-alike-genetically/>) In any case, I was getting concerned we might miss this species, as the first two former Golden-winged territories we checked were occupied by a Lawrence's and a Blue-winged Warbler respectively. But third territory was a charm, and we nailed gorgeous views of a handsome male, our final of 27 warbler species, and our final new bird of the trip!
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – Two birds, both males, were found on breeding territory-- the one mentioned above, and another at Backus Woods. Both gave us excellent views. We also saw a stakeout male Lawrence's Warbler at Carden. Lawrence's is the rarer of two hybrid forms resulting from the interbreeding of Golden-winged and Blue-winged warblers. The male Lawrence's showed well as it moved around singing the song of Blue-winged. It was my first ever of this form, and consequently my favorite bird of the trip, a choice shared by both Connee and Bob. I think it was also the first time a hybrid has ever placed in the top 3 birds of the trip!
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – Though it's a common species in Ontario, there really weren't all that many of these around this trip. I think we were only seeing between 1 and 5 per day, but at least they showed nicely.
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** (*Protonotaria citrea*) – We had just spent 20 minutes enjoying a little pocket of feeding warblers at close range along the Woodland Trail and were about to move away, when a couple of birders that had just walked up called to ask us if we'd seen the Prothonotary. Well, no, we hadn't! We hurried back and there he was feeding quietly around a fallen log in the water, where he popped in and out of sight, but eventually showed well for all. It was a good thing, too, as the trails at Rondeau were too flooded for us to get to the reliable territories there, and our only other view of this scarce local breeder was a bird that zipped past while we looked for the waterthrush at Backus Woods.
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – Small numbers (3-8) daily at Point Pelee but we saw no others after we left there, though we did hear one at Old Cut.
- NASHVILLE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Probably around 10 per day at Pelee, though many were not super cooperative. We did wind up with some super close views of one along the trails at Northwest Beach one afternoon. The bird was feeding low (as so many of the warblers were that day) and close to the trail, and even moved closer as we watched, even allowing us all to make out the often difficult to discern orange crown patch.
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – One of the few warblers that breed at Pelee, and a very common species there, particularly near the marshy areas. We saw plenty daily throughout the tour.
- HOODED WARBLER** (*Setophaga citrina*) – We missed this one at the migrant hot spots, though one or two were reported at Pelee while we were there. No matter, though, as this species is a fairly common breeder around Long Point, and we had excellent views at Backus Woods, where we easily found a singing male at the parking area that allowed us good scope views.
- AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Numbers were increasing daily during our time at Pelee, with 30+ seen on our 3rd day there, up from 2 on our first! Quite a few of them were remarkably tame and easy to see, including that first male along the Woodland Trail (where we also had our Prothonotary). We also saw quite a number of first-year males, looking very much like females, but usually with a few black feathers coming in on their breasts.
- CAPE MAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga tigrina*) – just a few each day at Pelee, with a high of about 6 on our first afternoon, but the ones we saw were seen very well, as several were feeding down at eye level or below. This is one of my (many) favorite warblers here.
- NORTHERN PARULA** (*Setophaga americana*) – Daily in small numbers at Pelee (high of about 10) but boy did they give some great looks! One pair of birds was feeding on and near the ground almost right next to the trail. Singles were also found at Rondeau and Backus Woods, where a bird with an odd song briefly raised hopes of the missing Cerulean Warbler.
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER** (*Setophaga magnolia*) – Moving through in good numbers during our time, with 20+ of them on a couple of days. Most were males, but there was a trickle of females already on their way through, too.
- BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** (*Setophaga castanea*) – There weren't a ton of these warblers about, but again, the ones we saw showed beautifully as they fed down low, on two afternoons in the northern stretches of Pelee. I've always considered this to be one of the scarcer warblers, until last week's news from Quebec in which an estimated 144,000 + flew past some observers in a 9 hour period! Dori would likely have been even more blown away than the rest of us, given that this was her pick for best bird of the trip!
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) – Another fan favorite, and both Eugenia and Richard chose this as their number one bird of the tour. Probably we saw no more than 5 per day at Pelee, but, again, the looks were phenomenal!
- YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Easily the most numerous warbler of the trip, and one of the few species that actually breeds at Pelee. These were pretty much everywhere, and often needed to be filtered out to get to the good stuff, i.e. less common warbler species.
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – Having just seen a bunch of these in non-breeding plumage in Costa Rica, where they are a common wintering bird, it was a real treat to see a bunch of these in brilliant breeding plumage.
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER** (*Setophaga striata*) – This is among the latest of the migrant warblers to pass through here, with the peak coming more towards the end of May. But we always seem to pick up one or two early migrants, or in this case, 6 of them, on our final day at Pelee. The first was a male that was vying for our attention on the opposite side of the road from the reticent Worm-eating Warbler.
- BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – Not many warblers rival this species for the extreme difference between male and female plumages. The female really looks like a completely different species, though the two sexes do share that little white wing patch. We had a few of each sex, though I suspect it was the dapper male that drove Molly to choose this as her favorite.
- PALM WARBLER** (*Setophaga palmarum*) – This tail-wagging species rarely is numerous here, and we only had a few, with a high of 4 on our last day at Pelee. They're usually easily seen however, as they like to hang out on or near the ground, and that's often where we saw them.

**PINE WARBLER** (*Setophaga pinus*) – A very early migrant, and I've rarely had one at Pelee during my tours there. Most have already gone through by the end of April. They do breed around Long Point, however, and we got a great view of a male at the parking area at Backus Woods, just after our first Hooded Warbler.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Setophaga coronata*) – Another early migrant that has usually already gone through by the time we do the tour, but there were still a small number trickling through, and we had 1-3 daily at Pelee, all of the eastern, Myrtle, type.

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** (*Setophaga virens*) – Seen in small numbers daily, none better than that lovely male feeding low in a scrubby juniper along the Northwest Beach Trail during our Kirtland's Warbler search.

**CANADA WARBLER** (*Cardellina canadensis*) – Seeing about 5 of these handsome warblers in one day at Pelee was a good count for a species we sometimes struggle to see at all on the tour.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – This may be pretty common in the west, but it seems much less so here in the east, so, as with the Canada Warbler, five of them on our final day at Pelee was a pretty decent showing. Martha must have liked the yarmulke, as she picked this as her favorite bird of the trip.

#### Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows).

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – A local birder put us onto a spot for this one near Backus Woods, and though it was the heat of the day, that didn't seem to matter as the bird came right in and sat on the fence nearby for some incredible views.

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – One was around the picnic area next to the VC parking lot at Pelee, our only one for the park. They were more common and seen a few more times once we moved to other regions.

**FIELD SPARROW** (*Spizella pusilla*) – The poor weather at Carden probably worked against us as far as this species was concerned. We heard a bird or two distantly, but they showed no interest in coming closer to the road. [\*]

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) – Coming through in pretty good numbers and we saw them daily at Pelee as well as at Rondeau.

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – Generally an earlier migrant than the preceding species, but there were still quite a few passing through. But it took a couple of folks a few tries before they got to see a nice white-striped form. The tan striped birds seemed to be more numerous and/or bolder.

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Poocetes gramineus*) – We heard one in the Long Point area when we stopped for the Horned Larks, but that was it for the trip. [\*]

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Only up in the grasslands of the Carden Alvar, where they were pretty common and easy to see.

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) – We did see a couple of these along the West Beach Trail at Pelee, but this is not a really common species there. Once we left there, however, it was one of the most numerous sparrows we encountered.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – The first day at Pelee was especially good for this secretive sparrow, and we had fine looks at a bunch of the 10+ we saw. The next couple of days we had just a handful of them, plus a single as we searched for a Kirtland's Warbler near Long Point.

**SWAMP SPARROW** (*Melospiza georgiana*) – We saw our only ones on the day we traveled north to Orillia, but whether they were at Cranberry Marsh or Prospect Marsh I don't quite recall.

**EASTERN TOWHEE** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) – It's a good thing someone spotted that singing male along the Northwest Beach trail on our last afternoon at Pelee, as it turned out to be the only one we saw. Usually they're not too hard to see at Carden, but I think the poor weather was keeping them down.

#### Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat).

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – This species has become quite scarce in Ontario, so finding one along the Northwest Beach trail when we didn't even know one was around was a nice surprise, and a good consolation prize during the failed search for the Kirtland's Warbler.

#### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies).

**SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – Not a breeder in the province, and the ones that show up here are overshoots from further south. A 1st year male had been hanging around for a week in Rondeau PP so we went and took a look for it, finding it pretty easily as it seemed to be favoring one particular yard.

**SCARLET TANAGER** (*Piranga olivacea*) – There were relatively few tanagers coming through during our trip, and we saw a grand total of 7, which is far fewer than we sometimes see. Still, the looks we had were fantastic, so I guess I shouldn't complain.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – This is such a common species it's easy to just take it for granted, but they really are amazing birds. We saw these stunners daily.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – There was a good push of these coming through and we saw plenty daily at the Lake Erie hot spots. Particularly at Rondeau (where they seemed especially numerous) a lot of them were feeding on the grounds, right on the tracks, so the views were awesome.

**INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*) – After not seeing any of these on our ramblings around Pelee our first morning, we pulled into our picnic lunch spot at Sleepy Hollow to find 5 or more glowing males feeding in the grass on the verges of the parking area. We saw only one more at Pelee the next day, then one at Backus Woods and a couple of males together at Cranberry Marsh. I don't recall seeing any females this trip.

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).

**BOBOLINK** (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) – A couple of calling birds went high overhead at the Tip one morning, but they were pretty unsatisfying. But lots of males were already on territory in the grasslands of the Carden Alvar where their striking plumage and their bubbling songs helped brighten up a cool, damp morning.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – Another species that is right at home in the Carden area grasslands, and we had a bunch of them flying around and loudly proclaiming their territories.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE** (*Icterus spurius*) – There's no better place in the country to see this species than at Point Pelee, as this is close to the northern limit of their breeding range. We didn't really hit the big push of these passing through, but still enjoyed 5-15 of them per day at the park.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – You could get tired of these common birds at Pelee if they weren't so incredibly brilliant and beautiful. We saw loads of them daily, with many of them feeding right out in the open at or below eye level. So much better than trying to find them in thick foliage in the canopy!



**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Abundant and often kind of annoying, as they were a major distraction whenever we were trying to find anything else.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*) – Not nearly as numerous as grackles and Red-wings, but there were more than enough of these around, too.

**COMMON GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – Sadly, we couldn't pick a Rusty Blackbird out from the heaps of these that were around every day.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**HOUSE FINCH** (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – A male just outside our Leamington hotel one morning was the only one in the Pelee area, but we ran into a few more at Rondeau and Long Point. [I]

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus tristis*) – There was barely a moment throughout the tour that these pretty but common birds weren't within earshot. A late nester, and consequently they also molt fairly late, so some males weren't 100% in breeding plumage.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Daily. I really hate seeing these down around the Tip at Pelee, but they've been present there for a few years at least. [I]

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## MAMMALS

**TRICOLORED BAT** (*Perimyotis subflavus*) – We were calling this an Eastern Pipistrelle, which is apparently no longer a thing. This is the new name as it is no longer considered congeneric with the other pipistrelles. One of these tiny bats was roosting daily above the washrooms at the tip.

**EASTERN COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – A few of these were noted at a number of sites, unfortunately including one ex-bunny along the road at Pelee.

**PLAIN EASTERN CHIPMUNK** (*Tamias striatus*) – Perhaps oddly there are none at Pelee, but Rondeau and especially Backus Woods are absolutely crawling with these little charmers.

**EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – Though most of the ones we saw were black, they still belong to this species, which we saw daily.

**RED SQUIRREL** (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) – Pretty closely tied to conifers and on this tour only seen at Paletta Park in Burlington.

**MUSKRAT** (*Ondatra zibethica*) – One was running across the lawn next to the parking lot of our Leamington hotel as we left for the park one morning. We saw a few more at the Port Rowan Wetlands, which, judging from the incredible number of lodges there.

**COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) – Dory saw one from the van during the drive to Rondeau.

**NORTH AMERICAN RIVER OTTER** (*Lontra canadensis*) – Easily the best mammal of the trip, though I wish it would have stuck around longer.

We were driving down Wylie Road on our final morning, just approaching the Sedge Wren Marsh, when this animal scampered across the road ahead of us and vanished just as quickly as it appeared.

**WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – We only saw a few, including one at Pelee that almost threw itself in front of the van.

*Herps*

**COMMON GARTERSNAKE** (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) – Our lone snake of the tour, this one was seen during our walk in Backus Woods. I was a bit jealous when I heard that some folks that were there about the same time as us found an Eastern Hog-nosed Snake nearby.

**AMERICAN BULLFROG** (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) – We heard a few at Big Creek, and tracked one down for a good look at this massive frog.

**GREEN FROG** (*Lithobates clamitans*) – Heard around the pond in Backus Woods. [\*]

**PAINTED TURTLE** (*Chrysemys picta*) – The most commonly seen and well-known turtle species in the province. We saw a trio of these colorful turtles at Hillman, then several more at Port Rowan and Cranberry Marsh.

**BLANDING'S TURTLE** (*Emydoidea blandingii*) – A rather rare turtle with a fairly restricted range, mainly around the Great Lakes. Easily told by their yellow chins that contrast from the overall dark coloration. We found a pair copulating in a corner of Hillman Marsh, though it took us a while to figure out what was going on. It wasn't immediately evident until the female popped her head out of the water!

**COMMON SNAPPING TURTLE** (*Chelydra serpentina*) – A monster-sized one was basking on a muskrat lodge at the Port Rowan Wetlands.

**AMERICAN TOAD** (*Anaxyrus americanus*) – A handful of these were hopping across the forest floor at Backus Woods.

**SPRING PEEPER** (*Pseudocris crucifer*) – We heard these somewhere at Pelee one day, perhaps in Tilden's Woods? [\*]

**GRAY TREEFROG** (*Hyla versicolor*) – Heard only at Rondeau. [\*]

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 175 bird taxa and 9 mammal taxa**